

# MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

*- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -*

**Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad**

Sunday, April 24, 2011



**Diwaniyah Beekeeping Program** – Omar Shwani PRT Diwaniyah Advisor secured QRF funds to purchase 360 beehives and beekeeping equipment for 90 farmers, in conjunction with a training course. The project is designed to improve job opportunities for farmers and increase honey production in Diwaniyah. This successful project met the goal of connecting the Babylon Beekeepers Association with perspective beekeepers to build the capacity of Babylon Beekeepers Association as well as develop a support system for beekeepers.



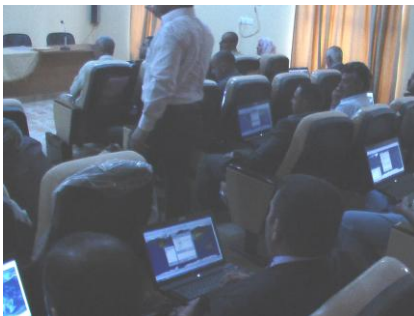
## **Wasit Province Women in Agriculture & AG-Related Business –**

A. The GOI Ministry of Agriculture's (MoA) Wasit AG Director General office employs:

- 383 persons at its main office in Al Kut City
- About 900 persons in total at its offices throughout Wasit Province
- About 130 women who work at various locations throughout the Province.

B. The GOI MoA's Wasit Seed Certification and Testing Office in Al Kut employs several women engineers who work as technicians in its seed testing and certification laboratory.

C. The GOI Ministry of Trade's Grain Board's Wasit Grain Storage Silos employ several women engineers who work as technicians at Silo Grading Laboratories in Al Kut City and Suwayrah City.



**Salah ad Din PRT Falcon View Training** – Salah ad Din Ag Extension Center leads FalconView geographic information system (GIS) training exercise. The SaD Ag Extension Center staff in Tikrit utilized a QRF micro grant to bring GIS expertise and tools to planning staffers in 15 Directorates in the province. Similar training conducted at Tikrit University earlier in the year now provides a local cadre of alonView/FalconView knowledge and experience to ensure that the program is sustainable after the PRT's departure.



**USDA Baghdad Visit to Anbar** – USDA Baghdad's Ron Verdonk and Mohamed Ibrahim traveled to Ramadi in Anbar province to visit PRT Anbar AgAdvisor Alex Miller to tour the Al Hameedyah Mushroom Farm and the Center of Desert Studies at Al-Anbar University. At the facility, Ron, Mohamed and Alex visited with the manager of the farm, Dr. Nawaf Khirbit. Dr. Nawaf does an excellent job as manager and has had great success in the mushroom business. This company is a shining star of agribusiness in Anbar and can serve as a model for other agribusiness in Iraq. Following the tour of the farm, the USDA reps. toured the Center of Desert Studies. Dr. Abed and his staff are doing impressive work on the development of wheat seed varieties tolerant to salinity.

**Personnel Update** - There are currently 27 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), at Embassy Baghdad or embedded with U.S. military units.

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